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ABSTRACT

Three questions are addressed in this document: (1) How have women been treated in social studies textbooks and curricula? (2) What are some strategies for including women in social studies? (3) What resources are recommended for teachers and students? Textbook studies of the 1970s revealed limited coverage of women in the social studies, and the few references to women conveyed negative stereotypes rather than balanced and realistic portrayals of changing roles in modern society. Coverage of women in textbooks increased in the 1980s, but neither the quality nor quantity of these treatments was adequate. Suggestions offered for integrating women in the curriculum are: (1) In economics, study the inequalities of income distribution and investigate why these inequalities exist in society. (2) In sociology, examine charges of sex discrimination in the United States and what these charges are based upon. (3) Political science classes can research significant court cases that have influenced women's rights in this country. (4) Geography, world history, and world studies can involve the analysis of the status of women in other countries and at other times. Resources are available at the international, national, state, and local levels. Several are noted, along with their areas of interest and addresses. A 10-item bibliography is included. (JB)

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"Remember the Ladies"—Women in the Curriculum

by Evelyn R. Holt

In March 1776, Abigail Adams implored her husband John to ". . .remember the ladies, and be more generous and favorable to them than your ancestors. . . ." This plea, unfortunately, did not affect the practical political behavior of John Adams and other founders of the United States. It was not until the 20th Amendment to the Constitution in 1919 that women throughout the United States gained a fundamental right of citizenship: the right to vote for representation in government.

The month of March, National Women's History Month, is an appropriate time to recall Abigail Adams' statement and to assess how women are treated in history and in other subjects of the social studies curriculum in schools. To what extent and how do social studies educators "remember the ladies" in curriculum development and teaching? This ERIC Digest examines (1) treatment of women in standard textbooks and curricula, (2) strategies for including women in the social studies curriculum, and (3) available resources for teachers and students.

How Have Women Been Treated in Social Studies Textbooks and Curricula? Textbooks are staples of teaching and learning in schools, and a student reads more than 32,000 textbook pages as he or she moves from elementary through secondary school. What images of women are presented on these pages?

Several textbook studies of the 1970s revealed slight coverage of women in history and other subjects of the social studies, and the few references to women in the textbooks tended to convey one-sided images of dependency, domesticity, and passivity—negative stereotypes rather than balanced and realistic portrayals of changing roles in modern society (Wirtenberg et al. 1980, 12). A 1972 study of 172 textbooks and supplementary materials used in the Kalamazoo, Michigan school system concluded that there was pervasive sexism in the curriculum. A 1978 study of textbooks and supporting materials used by the Michigan Department of Education yielded similar findings. All materials were flawed, especially in sex bias and treatment of Amerindians and handicapped people. Garcia and Woodrick (1979) concluded from their reviews of textbook studies and widely used textbooks that much needed to be done to more accurately depict both white and nonwhite females.

Coverage of women in textbooks increased throughout the 1980s. Neither the quality nor the quantity of these treatments has been adequate, however. Too often, women have been included in the margins of textbook content instead of at the core, as tokens or bit players rather than as major actors in the mainstream of history. "Great women" in history, for example, have been exhibited in photographs or special biographical sketches apart from the textbook narrative. The usual token females in United States history textbooks have been Mercy Otis Warren or Abigail Adams in the founding period, Sacajawea with the Lewis and Clark expedition, Harriet Tubman with the abolitionist movement, Jane Addams in conjunction with immigration and urban development, Susan B. Anthony as a champion of women's suffrage, Eleanor Roosevelt and Francis Perkins during the New Deal era, and Jacqueline Kennedy as the beautiful, bereaved widow of an assassinated President.

There has also been a tendency to feature female "firsts" in history—Marian Anderson as the first black opera star at the Met, Sandra Day O'Connor as the first female Supreme Court Justice, Elizabeth Blackwell as the first female physician in the United States, Amelia Earhart as the first female aviator, and so forth. These women, though deserving recognition, seemingly have been included more as an after-thought, separated from the main themes in the textbooks and curricula of elementary and secondary schools. Little recognition has been given to the brave pioneer women facing the perils of the western frontier, to the women working on farms and in factories, to the women in the labor movement, or to women as sustainers of families in urban and rural settings.

What Are Some Strategies for Including Women in Social Studies? Educators today are calling for integration of women in the various subjects that constitute the social studies curriculum, e.g., history, geography, civics, economics, sociology. For example, Gerda Lerner, the prominent historian, emphasizes that "women's history exists always *within the context* of universal history" and that the actions of women "take place within the context of the political and social life shared by men and women" (1981, 3). Women and men together create the history of humankind, so they should be linked in the curriculum as common contributors to the key events and developments of the human experience.

In addition to the preceding suggestions for integration, women can be incorporated in the curriculum in other ways. In economics, study the inequalities of income distribution and investigate why these inequalities exist in the society. Analyze labor history and research what roles women played in the early labor union movement. Examine studies done on the unpaid sectors of the economy, where much of women's work falls. Study other cultures and economies for comparisons to the U.S.

In sociology, in addition to examining the socialization process for women, also examine charges of sex discrimination in the U.S., and what these charges are based upon. Contact the sex equity division of the state government to see what programs are available and what the state is doing to ensure sex equity under

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the law. Research the roles of women in other cultures and examine how those roles have changed over time.

Political science classes can research significant court cases that have influenced women's rights in our country, and can examine the recognition of women by the legal system, beginning with the law of coverture in the colonies. Compare the rights of women in the United States with the rights of women in other countries. In recent times, as more countries are calling for greater democratization, women also are calling for greater rights within that system.

Geography, world history, and world studies can involve the analysis of the status of women in other countries and at other times to see what rights, if any, women enjoyed in various societies. What did/does it mean to be female in these nations? Compare and contrast the roles of women in urban and rural areas within the country. What have been women's roles in the history of the nations? Who were the notable women in history? What influence has geography had on development, particularly as related to women?

In United States history, focus not only on the notable token women but also on the unsung heroines who went into the offices with the invention of the typewriter and on how business changed as a result of this expansion of the workforce. When teaching about Dorothea Dix's crusade for more humane treatment of the mentally ill, research the conditions under which the mentally ill were kept. When teaching of Margaret Sanger's work in disseminating birth control information, teach about the poor with whom she worked and the misery of poverty for the large immigrant families she attended. Put these notable women into a social context so that the conditions they encountered are understood, as well as the actions they undertook. But do not forget the masses of ordinary women who sustain and improve society in the workforce, in the struggle for equality under the law, in the family as parents, and in various other ways.

By integrating women's studies into all aspects of the social studies, the curriculum will coincide with Recommendation Seven of the report of the Bradley Commission on History in Schools: "That history can best be understood when the roles of all constituent parts of history are included; therefore the history of women, racial and ethnic minorities, and men and women of all classes and conditions should be integrated into historical instruction" (1988, 8).

What Resources Are Recommended for Teachers and Students? Resources are available at the international, national, state, and local levels. The International Center for Research on Women, 1717 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 501, Washington, DC 20036, works with developing countries worldwide. They disseminate their findings to those concerned with economic and socioeconomic issues of developing nations, especially with those relating to women.

The International Women's Tribune Center, 777 U.N. Plaza, Third Floor, New York, NY 10017, answers requests for information and technical assistance for those involved in women's projects of developing nations, serves as a clearinghouse for information on women in development activities, and seeks to develop communications methods and educational materials with regional women's groups.

The National Women's History Project (NWHP), P.O. Box 3716, Santa Rosa, CA 95402, offers a wide variety of resources on women's studies. It was initially through the efforts of the founders of this project that the recognition of March as National Women's History Month was accomplished. Beginning as a county celebration in 1977 in Sonoma County (California), the movement spread to a co-sponsored Joint Congressional Resolution for National History Week in 1981. Contact them for information on other women's studies resources and information on celebrating National Women's History Month.

The Upper Midwest Women's History Center, Central Community Center, 6300 Walker Street, St. Louis Park, MN 55416, was funded in 1980 by the Women's Educational Equity Act. The resource center serves as a repository for women's materials from worldwide sources, assists teachers with curriculum materials and suggestions for women's studies, and can aid communities and schools in better integrating women's studies.

Toward the end of the 1980s, THE FEMINIST TEACHER emerged as a reader-developed magazine with the purpose of improving education about women and gender-based issues. The editorial office address is 442 Ballantine Hall, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405.

As Abigail Adams entreated her husband to "...remember the ladies...," so we too should remember them in the curriculum. Half of the story of human life is omitted without it. If we are truly to educate the total person, we can no longer afford to leave women out of the curriulum.

Reference and ERIC Resources

The following list of resources includes references used to prepare this Digest. The items followed by an ED number are in the ERIC system and are available in microfiche and paper copies from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). For information about prices, contact EDRS, 3900 Wheeler Avenue, Alexandria, Virginia 22304; telephone numbers are 703-823-0500 and 800-227-3742. Entries followed by an EJ number are annotated monthly in CIJE (CURRENT INDEX TO JOURNALS IN EDUCATION), which is available in most libraries. EJ documents are not available through EDRS; however, they can be located in the journal section of most libraries by using the bibliographic information provided below.

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